
January 14, 2022

Updated Guidance and Clarification from Associate Deputy Minister

Dear Residents, Long-Term Care Team Members and Supportive Partners,

Earlier this afternoon, a [memo](#) from Associate Deputy Minister, Erin Hannah, and related supporting guidance documents were circulated to your Long-Term Care Home teams in an effort to clarify recent changes to the following areas:

- **LTC Home COVID-19 Immunization policy requirements**
 - Third doses provide extra protection from COVID-19 – these are now mandated for those who work and visit you in your LTC home.
 - Staff, support workers, student placements, volunteers and caregivers become eligible for a third dose 3 months after receiving their second dose.
 - Upon becoming eligible, there are deadline parameters set to ensure everyone working at your home or visiting is fully immunized in a safe and timely fashion.
 - Homes will have flexibility to grant short-term extensions on a case by case basis, for example, if someone falls ill with the virus or is unable to secure a vaccination by the specified date.
 - These requirements can be accessed [here](#) in the LTC COVID-19 Guidance Document.

- **Ministry expectations around resident care - showers and bathing**
 - Memo clarifies that all residents, “should have access to showers and baths, including when a home or areas of a home are experiencing an outbreak.”
 - Residents who are currently isolating and/or under additional precautions should not have their bathing routine disrupted.

- **Updated Return to Work Risk-Based Framework**
 - Ministry has revised guidance around when fully vaccinated staff who have been in close contact or are COVID-19 positive themselves can safely return to work to minimize risk and support homes experiencing serious staffing shortages.

- The framework can be accessed [here](#) in the LTC COVID-19 Guidance Document.
 - **Caregivers' ability to support more than one symptomatic or isolating resident**
 - Many caregivers have stepped up and are volunteering to support more than one resident to help during the current staffing crisis.
 - Memo clarifies that, based on public health advice, caregivers may support up to two residents who are COVID-19 positive, provided the home obtains consent from all involved residents (or their substitute decision makers). Caregivers may also support more than one resident in non-outbreak situations, with the same expectation regarding resident consent.
 - You may access a more detailed explanation [here](#) in the LTC COVID-19 Guidance Document.
 - Erin's full memo can be accessed: [here](#).
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Frequently Asked Questions:

The Ministry has once again included some helpful clarification in the latest iteration of their LTC Pandemic Response Frequently Asked Questions document. You may access the full document [here](#).

Question 1: Can unvaccinated caregivers visit outdoors?

Answer: Yes, unvaccinated caregivers may still visit residents outdoors.

Question 2: Can residents from different cohorts socialize with each other?

Answer: Yes, residents can socialize within and across units, in small groups, when indoors and outdoors. Residents should still follow public health measures, especially when indoors, which includes masking (as tolerated) and maintaining physical distancing when possible.

Residents should be cohorted when eating or drinking (such as during dining hours); during high-risk activities such as singing and dancing; during an outbreak or when a resident(s) is isolating; or when following the direction of a local public health unit which has explicitly prohibited mixing cohorts.

While the specific limit to social gatherings under the “Roadmap to Reopen” (of five indoors) does not apply to LTC homes, each home should determine the size of social gatherings among residents that best reflect the realities of the home from a staffing and space perspective to ensure these social opportunities are as safe as possible.

Minister of LTC Rod Phillips, resigns from Doug Ford's Cabinet

Earlier this afternoon, news sources, including the [Toronto Star](#), have reported that the current Minister of Long-Term Care, Rod Phillips has announced his plans to retire from politics and will not be running in the June 2 election.

During his short term as Minister of LTC, OARC has welcomed opportunities to consult directly with Minister Phillips and his team, and work alongside our government partners to ensure the resident voice and lived experiences were always kept top of mind.

We look forward to sharing more details as we become aware of them.

Yours sincerely,



Dee Tripp (formerly Lender)
Executive Director, OARC

The French version of the Bulletin will be posted on the OARC website soon after distribution (<https://www.ontarc.com/communications/bulletins.html>).